

To the Consulate General of U.S.S.R. in Shanghai:

MARINE PROTEST

I, Captain Levchenko, Anatoly Vasilievich, Commander of U.S.S.R. motor vessel "Maikop" (1826 Gross Registered Tons) being first duly sworn, hereby depose and say:

On 14th December 1941, m/v "Maikop" which is the property of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, sailed under my command, with 12 officers (including myself) and 23 members of the crew (total 35 persons), from the port of Soerabaja (Java) for Vladivostok, carrying a cargo of 1994 metric tons of Liquid Coconut oil, in accordance with instructions received from the Far Eastern Department of U.S.S.R. Merchant Marine.

On 20th December 1941, at 7.00 a.m., the m/v "Maikop" was passing 33 miles South of Sarangani Islands, heading East-North-East. At about 7.10 a.m., two single engine airplanes (one hydroplane and one land plane) were sighted, approaching us from East. In accordance with International Rules the U.S.S.R. flag was hoisted on our stern, to show the nationality of our ship. At about 7.18 a.m., (Dec. 20th) these two airplanes flew over our ship and started circling around her at an altitude of about 150-200 meters. I could clearly see red circles on the wings and fuselages of said airplanes, which shows that they were of Japanese nationality.

The weather was bright and clear, with good visibility and the U.S.S.R. flag was flying over the stern of our ship. There is absolutely no doubt, that our U.S.S.R. flag could be clearly seen and distinguished, as well as the name of our ship, which was painted on both sides of the "Maikop's" bridge.

First Attack: Nevertheless, at 7.40 a.m., one of the airplanes (the land plane) dropped two bombs aimed at our ship; the bombs fell not far from our vessel, one about 8 metres and the other about 15 metres from the "Maikop". A radio messages was immediately sent by me to the U.S.S.R. Merchant Marine at Vladivostok and also to Tarakan and Davao (for transmission to Vladivostok), informing them of the bombing of our ship, the m/v "Maikop" by Japanese airplanes.

In view of said bombing I decided to turn back, returning on my course toward Soerabaja.

Second Attack: At 10.00 a.m., the same morning (December 20th) an airplane, bearing similar red circles again appeared and dropped a

torpedo aiming at our ship; I maneuvered, turning my ship hard a port, and the torpedo missed our stern. A few minutes later three more twin-motored Japanese bombers (land planes) with red circle markings, started to bomb us, the bombs falling very close to our ship, and as a result she suffered severe damage, injury and deformations. Between 10 a.m. and noon the Japanese bombers continually attacked us, they dropped about 12 bombs aimed at our ship. During these nerve-wrecking two hours, I was continually maneuvering my ship, attempting to dodge the airplanes, as they flew across our course, at an altitude of about 1000 metres to release their bombs aimed at our ship. As I saw the planes "lining up" and taking a course which indicated to me, that they were intending to drop another bomb, I would immediately change the direction of the ship, so that on many occasions the airplanes would not be in good position to drop their bombs and then they would circle and make another attack. We were bombed for about an hour and one half. At about 11.30 after dropping approximately 12 bombs all three airplanes coming lower, machine-gunned our ship, from an altitude of about 200 metres, flying over us and alongside in the direction we were going, viz., from our stern toward our bow. We were machine-gunned by these planes for about 25 minutes. The second attack lasted nearly two hours; viz., we were bombed for about an hour and a half (10.00 a.m. to 11.30) and machine-gunned from about 11.30 to 11.55 a.m.

When the second bombing by Japanese airplanes started, I was compelled to turn North toward the Island of Mindanao, to save the lives of the crew, should the vessel sink as a result of said bombing.

Third Attack: The same day. (December 20th) at about 2.30 p.m. four Japanese bombers of a similar type and with similar red circle markings, appeared and dropped about 20 bombs on our ship. During this bombing attack the ship sustained very serious damage; direct hits were made on our Radio room, Chart room and Foremast; both Radio and Chart rooms were demolished and Radio Operator Dianov, E.I. was killed; bombs exploded in the water very near our ship and caused her plates to buckle, bend and open below the ship's waterline. The third attack lasted from 2.30 p.m. to about 5.00 p.m., December 20th, when the airplanes flew away.

At about 6.00 p.m., December 20th, 1941, we anchored off the South coast of Mindanao Island, three miles west of Butulaki village. To save the lives of the crew and avoid unnecessary casualties, part of our personnel, wounded persons, men and women member of the crew, who were not on duty, were sent ashore.

Fourth Attack. At about 9.00 a.m., December 21st, our ship was again bombed at a low altitude by Japanese planes for about half an hour; approximately 9 more bombs were dropped, aimed at our ship.

On the afternoon of December 21st., an inspection of the ship was made by myself, my officers and crew. We found a "stabilizer" from a Japanese bomb in our demolished chart room. Said "stabilizer" bore the following marks; a Japanese character of square shape and number "96" in arabic (English) figures; The "stabilizer" was painted with red lead on the inside and had four metal "fins" on it, which were not as long as the body of the "stabilizer". On the outside it was painted gray, with superimposed colored lines. A similar "stabilizer" was stuck in our foremast.

Said inspection disclosed that my ship, the m/v "Maikop" had suffered the following damage from the aforesaid Japanese bombing attacks:-

- a) Large holes in hull, fore and aft.
- b) Holes in tanks Nos. 1, 9, 10, 11, and 12.
- c) Holes in main bunkers on both port and starboard side.
- d) Damage to and leakage of hull into engine room.
- e) Demolition of radio room and chart room.
- f) Destruction of officers quarters under bridge; part of engineer's quarters, ship's saloon, and crew's accommodation.
- g) The deck and deck cargo pipelines, et c, were pierced by bomb fragments and on the starboard side the pipeline was demolished (this pipeline was used to pump bulk liquid cargo into and out of the ship).
- h) All moving parts and shafting of the main engine was shifted and dislodged; pipelines were torn, compressed air tanks were shifted and moved from their proper position.
- i) Forepeak pump room was flooded and the forepeak pump was out of commission.
- j) Both our port Electric cargo pump and cleaning pump were damaged by bombs to such an extent that they could not be used.
- k) The starboard cargo pump had also been damaged and would not work properly. It was damaged to such an extent, that we were not able to pump out the water, in the hull, with this pump,

as fast as it was leaking into our ship.

With the approach of darkness on 21st December, 1941, I ordered the crew, who had been sent ashore the previous night to return to the ship. After the crew were on board, at about 8.00 p.m., December 21st with great difficulties, the m/v "Maikop" was moved under her own power to Sarangani Bay, a place better protected from winds and the sea, and we anchored off Makar village.

Owing to holes in the ship's hull resulting from the aforesaid bombing attacks, she was steadily filling with water and it was very difficult to keep her afloat, as all our water pumps and equipment had been damaged.

As above stated, during said bombing attacks, our radio operator Dianov E.I. was killed, and 6 member of the crew were wounded (Chief Mate Bryzgin, crew members Fomin, Haibrahmanov, Gorelenko, Sedov, Berdnikov). The body of Radio Operator Dianov was carried ashore and buried on the evening of December 20th, 1941, near the village of Butulaki on the Mindanao Island. The wounded received first medical treatment from our ship's Doctor Krasnokutsky. On December 22nd, the wounded were again sent ashore for further medical attention; two of the wounded were placed in Lagao Hospital by courtesy of the local authorities. At the same time also part of the crew who were not then on duty, were transferred ashore.

As a result of the above damage, sustained by my ship, m/v "Maikop", through bombing attacks by Japanese planes, the ship sank completely at about 2.00 a.m., 26th December, 1941, near the village of Makar. It was impossible to beach the ship in shallow water, as the main engine had been so badly damaged, that it would not run at that time.

The crew was transferred into our lifeboats at about 1.00 a.m., December 26th, 1941, when it appeared that we were sinking. After the m/v "Maikop" sank we went ashore and joined our comrades, who had been previously sent ashore.

The motor vessel "Maikop" completely sank and perished with the following:

1. A cargo of liquid cocoanut oil - 1994.1 metric tons.
2. Bunkers, diesel oil - 120 tons.
3. Lubricating oils - 4 tons.
4. Ship's inventory and equipment.
5. Most of the personal property and effects of the crew.

As aforesaid, a direct hit, and an explosion of great force, demolished:

(a) the chart room and the ship's log book: chief mate Bryzgin was wounded at that time during the execution of his duties;

(b) The same bomb demolished our radio room, which was adjoining the chart room and the radio log book was also destroyed. Radio Operator Dianov was instantly killed by this bomb, while executing his duties.

The following were saved:-

1. Ship's Engine log book.
2. Ship's documents.
3. Cargo documents (Bills of Lading, Manifests, Licenses for cargo and Mate's Receipts.)
4. Ship's cash and cash vouchers.
5. Three ship's clocks and one stop watch.

From 3 a.m., December 26th, until 31st May 1942, the officers and crew of the "Maikop" have resided on the shore of Mindanao Island, landing first, near Makar, a Moro-village. This Moro-village is so small, that there are no houses, only bamboo huts set on piles two or three metres above the ground. We stayed two days in Makar village; 5 days in the small town of Cotobato; 3 days in the small town of Illigan; then to the small town of Malaybalay, where we stayed from January 6th, 1942, until we were taken to Manila by the Japanese authorities.

It was impossible to lodge a Marine Protest regarding the loss of the m/v "Maikop" with anyone or any official on the Island of Mindanao, in view of the Japanese-American hostilities in this area at that time. I was only permitted by the American Military authorities in the provincial town of Malaybalay, on the Island of Mindanao, to send a cable to the U.S.S.R. Ambassador in Washington, D.C., United States of America, notifying him of the loss of the USSR motor vessel "Maikop" (said cable was sent on 24 January, 1942.)

On 31st May 1942, the officers and crew of m/v "Maikop" were sent by the Japanese authorities, under guard, by a transport, to Manila, arriving there on June 4th, 1942. We were detained in Manila, under guard, by the Japanese authorities, from June 4th to June 17th, 1942. I and my officers and crew were not allowed to move out of the place where we lived and therefore I could not lodge a Marine Protest at Manila.

On June 17th, 1942, the Japanese authorities shipped us to Shanghai by a Japanese military transport "Takacka Maru". The transport arrived in Shanghai on 25th June, 1942. I, my officers and my crew were detained by the Japanese authorities, under guard, in Shanghai from June 25th to June 30th, inclusive, at the Japanese Naval barracks, situated on Szechuen Road, Shanghai. During our stay in said barracks, I and all the officers and members of the crew were forced to give evidence to Japanese Consular Officials regarding the loss of the m/v "Maikop". After said evidence was given, at 5.30 p.m., June 30th, 1942, the Officers and crew were handed over to Mr. J.P. Sharikoff, U.S.S.R. Consular Representative at Shanghai.

This is, therefore, the first opportunity, that I have had to lodge a Marine Protest and file a full report concerning the loss of my ship, the U.S.S.R. m/v "Maikop" and its cargo.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Captain LEVCHENKO, A.V., Commanding the m/v "Maikop" hereby lodge this Marine Protest against, and repudiate any and all claims, that may be presented to me or to my owners, arising from or concerning the loss of the said m/v "Maikop" or its cargo.

A.V. Levchenko,
Captain in command of m/v
"Maikop".

Shanghai, 1st July, 1942.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2nd day of July, 1942.

J. P. Sharikoff,
Consular Representative of the
U.S.S.R. at Shanghai, China.